

Florin Japanese American Citizens League  
Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

PERCY TAKESHI MASAKI

Sacramento, California  
June 14, 1995

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Florin Japanese American Citizens League  
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# JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

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## PREFACE

In the summer of 1987, a small group of people from the Florin JACL met at Mary and Al Tsukamoto's home to plan a new project for the organization. Because of the unique history of Florin, we felt that there were special stories that needed to be preserved. The town of Florin, California was once a thriving farming community with a large Japanese American population. The World War II internment of persons of Japanese ancestry living on the west coast, devastated the town and it never recovered. Today there is no town of Florin; it has been merged into the larger county of Sacramento. Many Japanese Americans who reside throughout the United States, however, have their origins from Florin, or have relatives and friends who once had ties to this community. The town may no longer exist, but the spirit of the community continues to survive in people's hearts and memories.

Several hours have been devoted to interviewing former Florin residents. The focus of the interviews was on the forced internment and life in the relocation camps, but our questions touched on other issues. We asked about their immigration to the United States from Japan, pre-war experiences, resettlement after the war and personal philosophies. We also wanted to record the stories of the people left behind. They were friends and neighbors who watched in anguish as the trains transported the community away.

We have conducted these interviews with feelings of urgency. If we are to come away with lessons from this historic tragedy, we must listen to and become acquainted with the people who were there. Many of these historians are in their 70's, 80's and 90's. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and to answer our questions with openness and thoughtfulness.

We owe special thanks to James F. Carlson, former Assistant Dean of American River College and to Jackie Reinier, former Director of the Oral History Program at California State University in Sacramento. Without their enthusiasm, encouragement and expertise, we never could have produced this collection of oral histories. We also wish to acknowledge the project members, volunteers, the Florin JACL which contributed financial support, Sumitomo Bank for their corporate donation, and the Taisho Young Mens Association which contributed some of their assets as they dissolved their corporation on December 31, 1991.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Percy Takeshi Masaki is a Nisei (2nd generation Japanese) man born in Sacramento, California, on August 12, 1910. Percy lived in the Sacramento area while he was growing up and attended various elementary schools and the Sacramento High School. During and after graduating high school, he worked in agriculture and in a retail produce store.

He married his wife Gladys (Imahara) in 1932 and they had two sons and a daughter. The children went on to become a doctor, a dentist and a physical therapist.

Percy opened a supermarket in 1939 in North Sacramento. It was doing very well when World War II started in 1941. Percy along with all other Japanese, citizens and non-citizens, was ordered to report for incarceration. The business was sold at a great loss and was never started again.

Percy and his family were incarcerated at Wallerga (Assembly Center near Citrus Heights) and shortly after were moved to the Tule Lake Internment Camp. They relocated to Utah late in 1942 and Percy worked in various jobs for the duration of the war. Percy returned to Sacramento in 1945 to the house they owned in North Sacramento.

Percy changed occupations and became an insurance salesman and later opened his own real estate office.

Percy is a lifetime member of the Sacramento Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) and devoted much of his time holding various offices, starting the highly successful scholarship program, a Junior Olympic Program, building the organization with a membership of 1,000 at one time and used his Real Estate Office as the JACL office.

Today, Percy and Gladys still live in the same house in North Sacramento that they bought in 1939. They are in reasonably good health and their activities are centered around their three children and seven grandchildren.

## INTERVIEW HISTORY

### INTERVIEWER

Mas Hatano is a retired Civil Engineer from the California Department of Transportation.

### INTERVIEW TIME AND PLACE

June 14, 1996  
At the home of Percy and Gladys Masaki  
481 Arden Way, Sacramento, CA 95815  
Several awards,plaques and family pictures were loaned for copying.

### TRANSCRIBING AND WORDPROCESSING

Transcribing and wordprocessing was done by Ruby Uno, a member of the Florin JACL.  
The manuscript was edited by Mas Hatano, Percy and Gladys Masaki and Colleen Matsumoto, daughter of Percy.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Several old family pictures were reproduced by Dan Inouye, member of Florin JACL and shared with the CSUS archives.

### TAPES AND INTERVIEW RECORDS

Copies of the bound transcript and the tapes will be kept by the Florin Japanese American League and in the University Archives at the Library, California State University, Sacramento, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, California 95819.

## I.

HATANO: This is an interview with Percy Takeshi Masaki, a Nisei man age 85 years old. This interview was held at 481 Arden Way, Sacramento, California, on June 14, 1995. Percy's wife, Gladys, assisted in the interview.

HATANO: Percy, where were you born?

MASAKI: I was born in Sacramento.

HATANO: What year was that?

MASAKI: Oh, it was 1910.

GLADYS: August 12th.

MASAKI: August 12, 1910.

HATANO: Your father came from Japan?

MASAKI: Yeah.

HATANO: What year did he come here?

MASAKI: That we don't know.

HATANO: OK, and your mother came at the same time. They were married when they came here from Japan?

MASAKI: I think they were married by...

GLADYS: picture bride.

MASAKI: picture bride.

HATANO: And, how many brothers and sisters do you have?

MASAKI: I have one stepbrother, he died about ten years ago.

GLADYS: And then you have a sister.

MASAKI: Oh yeah, I have a half-sister.

HATANO: Uh huh.

MASAKI: And she also died about five years ago.

GLADYS: See, their father's second marriage and he adopted a son. He had Kuichi Masaki who ran the Senator Bait Shop, or Fish. And, the Mother had a daughter, and they were picture brides. When they married through the pictures, through his grandfather and all she knew was she went by the pictures and the grandfather says, "my boy in America he doesn't drink, he doesn't smoke, he works hard. He's a workaholic". The picture looks very distinguished. So that's how his Mother came. Before she came, that adopted son was about 12 or 13, and she thought, instead of her daughter, she's a woman, she asked her sister to take care in Japan and left her and then she brought this Kuichi. He's going to carry the Masaki name so they came together from Japan.

HATANO: Your father when he was here, what kind of work did he do?

MASAKI: More of a common laborer.

GLADYS: First of all he came as a Nevado-no railroad worker. What did they call that? The worker who laid tracks. He was one of the...what did he say? He worked on a handcar or somebody who pumps up and down and he's a hard worker. He didn't speak English, but he's a hard worker and people used to, you know, kind of look up to him. So that was the first job.

HATANO: Percy, when you were growing up, what do you remember about your childhood, say when you were at the elementary school level?

MASAKI: I remember going up to the fourth grade in Washington School in Yolo County. And, I don't remember too much about it except that I liked math and as I grew older I still liked math and that's about all I can remember. Had some fights, heh, heh, heh.

HATANO: Did you have mostly Japanese friends or were they Caucasian or...?

MASAKI: Well, up to fourth grade, mostly Japanese friends because we were farmers. They all had kids and they're

Japanese and didn't have too much Caucasian friends.

GLADYS: But the owner of the property was hakujin.

MASAKI: Oh, yeah.

HATANO: Percy, what do you remember about entertainment? What did you do to have fun when you were in the elementary level? Do you remember any games that you played, or...?

MASAKI: No, I didn't.

GLADYS: He was a quiet fellow, shy fellow. He used to hang on his mother's apron.

HATANO: When you were in the elementary school level, were your parents strict with you?

MASAKI: What do you mean?

HATANO: Well, did they tell you, you can't do this, you can't do that and they raised you in a very disciplined manner?

MASAKI: No, not that strict.

GLADYS: Cause he was the only son. So he's precious. Ha, ha, ha.

HATANO: Did you help out working on the farm there when you were in the elementary school level?

MASAKI: No, I was a little too small.

GLADYS: Until later when he moved to Riverside on the other side of William Land Park. They used to have a farm there.

MASAKI: That was second farm when my father was 60 years old.

He started another farm...

GLADYS: Truck farm.

MASAKI: Yeah.

HATANO: Did you participate in anything like boy scouts or  
judo or things like that?

MASAKI: No, I didn't.

GLADYS: I don't think they had a boy scout troop or judo, they  
might have had kendo.

HATANO: Do you recall when you were in elementary school whether  
you were discriminated against or treated like the rest  
of the children?

MASAKI: I don't remember discrimination during my grammar school  
days.

HATANO: Let's move on to your high school years. When you got  
into high school where did you go to school?

MASAKI: High school, junior high in middle of Sacramento city at  
18th and J there was a junior high school and I went there  
for two years. Then I went to senior high school, Sacra-  
mento Senior High. That was a pretty big place. The  
Japanese were small so they didn't get to participate  
in football, basketball and so forth.

HATANO: Did you participate in any other school activity while

you were in high school?

MASAKI: No, I didn't.

GLADYS: Yeah, you were in German class, math class, and what were the others? You were an honor student.

MASAKI: No, not much participation.

GLADYS: Not much but that's what you told me. You were good in German. You were taking German and math?

HATANO: When you were in high school, at that time, were you allowed to date or go out with girls?

MASAKI: No, no such thing.

GLADYS: He was too shy. There were Kozono's girls after him.  
Ho, ho, ho.

HATANO: During your high school years, what kind of job did you have? Did you work outside of school?

MASAKI: My three years, since my father was farming ten acres, I helped right after school. I had a cousin that lived with me. He also helped. From the moment we came back from school, we changed our clothes and went on the farm and did driving a horse and stuff like that.

GLADYS: You also went to market, delivered the goods and you also went to free market. That's where he became a business man.

HATANO: When you were in high school did you have any ambition of being a doctor, a lawyer, an airplane pilot, or anything like that?

MASAKI: Well, there's not too many doctors, Japanese doctors, I wanted to become a doctor and so forth, but I found out it was expensive and you have to be good in grades so that I was detoured to be a fruit and vegetable man in a market, which was getting popular. They called it a drive in market, where a car drove right to the front of the store. So I settled with my brother that I won't go beyond high school, but I'll help the store. So I helped at the store and in about a year I had an opportunity to run my own store. I went into the fruit and vegetable business which throughout the West Coast, starting from Los Angeles, the Japanese were not becoming professional men. They ran the markets which were real popular.

GLADYS: Where did you start this?

MASAKI: I had this opportunity to run my own store in North Sacramento, California.

GLADYS: Del Paso Blvd. That was 1618 Del Paso Blvd wasn't it? The first market we had on the Boulevard. And after four years we started this one in 1940. That's the big market,

supermarket. He was the owner of that. Friend of ours built the big grocery store for us and we had hired a butcher. There was a big butcher section there, a meat counter and a grocery store. He had a hakujin manager for the grocery store, and the butcher was the same thing, hakujin. And, then the Japanese. That's where we had Hiyama. He worked till last day before evacuation. Fruits and vegetables. He was a good man. Frank Hiyama used to control all the boys. I think he did a lot of hiring then. College students, high school and college students. We had Mr. Sakai, Willie Sakai and his brother worked for us. Of course Frank Hiyama. Who else did we have? Sunahara, no. What was that boy's name?

MASAKI: Hiroshi.

GLADYS: Hiroshi. He went to Colorado or someplace. He did produce too. And then we had Sunahara.

MASAKI: We had all kinds of people working for us.

GLADYS: Yeah, weekends. I don't know how many boys we had in two places.

MASAKI: Two places. We have over dozen workers.

GLADYS: At least eleven, definitely. And weekends we had extra, young boys during the day and evening. We opened from 10 o'clock until the curfew. Curfew we had to close on time.

HATANO: Percy, we'll talk a little more about this business later on. What I'd like to do now is ask you how you met your wife and when you got married. How did you meet your wife?

MASAKI: Well, since my cousin got married to an Imahara, first one that got married, Imahara had four or three boys and they wanted to get the oldest one married off. He married my cousin.

GLADYS: He used to come and visit me at the farm. That was on the Fruitridge Taishoku and my brother and a cousin had sixty acres there and he used to come with a girl cousin and Niro. I don't know Niro Sunada's cousin.

MASAKI: No, you don't know.

GLADYS: Well, anyway, she was a Sunada. And then they got married and that's how we happened to know each other. But we did have a nakaodo. He had two nakaodo on his side, Kataoka-san and, who was the other one, Hirozawa-san on his side. And I had a farmer-no-friend, a lady, I kinda forgot her name. They all went back to Japan. Two nakaodos, they met first, but we knew each other by then. We didn't go out or anything. We just say, "hello", that's it.

HATANO      What year was it that you got married?

MASAKI:      1933

GLADYS:      32. Sets was born 33.

MASAKI:      That's close enough.

HATANO:      How many years after high school was that?

MASAKI:      About three years after high school.

HATANO:      You were a young man when you got married.

GLADYS:      Yeah, he was only 22, no was it 21?

MASAKI:      22's good enough.

GLADYS:      All right. Then he spent time in Japan. His folks thought father had made quite a bit on the farm so he is gonna retire since he was a 42 no toki no kodomo yo. So he retired and took his son home and the folks going to give their son a Japanese no hombo yomesan. But he didn't stay. How long did you stay there?

MASAKI:      Where?

GLADYS:      Japan. When first you went back.

MASAKI:      Three months.

GLADYS:      Was it three months? And then he says, "I'm going back and marry Toyoko". And father says, "why don't you wait little bit more. I'll go home and I'll ask for her". But he didn't wait. He left his folks and came back all by himself and say he's gonna start the market.

HATANO: Ok, Percy, you got married now and you worked in the produce business and you wanted to start your business. It takes money to start a business. Where did you get the money? Did you get a loan from the bank and get started? Is that what you did?

MASAKI: It so happened that I didn't have to borrow any money. I had a little bit of my own and the truck was given to me by my brother. And, my brother bought another bigger truck and gave me the old one.

GLADYS: He was working for his brother. The brother had a vegetable and fruit stand at 19th and Broadway. And that was the first open-air market in Sacramento, wasn't it? He worked there. How many years?

MASAKI: You get me all confused...

GLADYS: No, cause you worked for your brother first...

MASAKI: I'm confused by you talking in between.

GLADYS: Well, you gotta make your history straight before we start going on. Toshio was already born, see, when we started the supermarket and, in fact, Hatsumi, my youngest daughter was born when we moved here. So that's 1940.

MASAKI: Where were we?

HATANO: OK. You were starting your business now and I asked you where did you get the money to start the business and you indicated well, you had some and somebody gave you this. Your brother gave you the truck.

MASAKI: In those days we didn't need too much money to start the produce business because if it's canned goods, it's big money because you had to pay off quite a bit. But produce, it's changing every day. You got to sell it every day, practically. So we didn't have to put up a big amount of money. After running it for about four years, I had an opportunity to run a supermarket. The promoter came to ask me if I wanted to run a supermarket that's busy quite a bit. I okayed it and this is the fellow...

GLADYS: A. B. Ware

MASAKI: No, wait, wait, wait. You get me all confused here. Putting in your own...So I had to sell, promote this market. And then I buy equipment from him. And I bought meat equipment, all scales, all kinds of scales. And I got the brand new store and had a grand opening November 25th, 1939. And I ran the store for two years until the evacuation time when the Japanese were

evacuated. I had my money stuck into the store and we were in confusion about what to do. And what to do about cash, by that time, since this is second store. The first store gave me a good profit and I had enough money to buy the equipment for cash. I sold for twenty-one thousand dollars. The grocery stock, liquor, and all that I paid for the building and equipment was twenty-one thousand. So when the Chinese buyer came, I made a deal. I would sell for twenty-one thousand dollars. I got twenty-one thousand dollars and then we evacuated.

GLADYS: Who did you sell to?

MASAKI: Wing Lee Meat Company. Had the money in the bank and with that money I promised to buy United States war bonds. A hundred dollars a month. I had no income but I had this twenty-one thousand dollars so I bought hundred dollars a month through Bank of America. I told Bank of America to just take the money from the twenty-one thousand dollars but instead there was some double talk and when I actually got the bonds back in my hand, I found out they were buying two hundred dollars a month in war bonds. That was all right because war bonds made interest for me and it was a good deal for me. The government, my money and me, war bonds to help the war out.

HATANO: Percy, let's back up here for a minute. Your business did very well and everything was going along very nicely and your business was getting established, then Pearl Harbor was bombed and war started. When you heard about Pearl Harbor, what did you think?

MASAKI: I thought the bottom fell out. I didn't know what to say or do because I was right in the market when this thing came through the radio. The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. It really stunned me.

GLADYS: Yeah I was...we were fixing the sink, remodeling a sink, and this fellow said, "Mam, you want to continue this?" And I said, "sure, we're Americans. The name and the face may be Japanese, but we're citizens and they can't do anything to us". So we continued to have it fixed. He, he, he.

HATANO: When Pearl Harbor was bombed, right after that, was your business affected?

MASAKI: Yeah. The steady customer refused to buy from me because they found out others, their friends would boycott them. Some of them got on the telephone and said that they can't come and buy from me because of Pearl Harbor. Many of them quit coming to our store.

GLADYS: They had a curfew. What time was it we had to close?

Early? We had opened until 10 you know, but we couldn't do it on account of the curfew. The reason for that is, McClellan Air Base used to ship tanks and all the guns through the area. This was the only road (Del Paso Blvd) we had from San Francisco to Reno. That was when they were shipping so we had to stay in a blackout. We had to close all the windows and can't even get out. Especially Japanese people. So that hurt the business.

HATANO: Let's get on to the evacuation. Shortly after Pearl Harbor they started evacuating some of the Japanese and when they told you here in the Sacramento area, that all of the Japanese would be evacuated at that time, you tried to sell your business, is that correct?

MASAKI: To sell our business?

HATANO: Yeah.

MASAKI: Sell.

HATANO: Yeah, at that time you sold your business?

MASAKI: Yeah, we had a buyer right away.

HATANO: Did you have to take a financial loss because you had to sell?

MASAKI: Yeah, goodwill is a big asset. We put in a lot of labor and built a business and then we gave it away. Too much.

So we took a, actually a beating.

II.

HATANO: Right after that you were put into an internment camp.

Where did you go?

MASAKI: First we went to Walerga, which is close to McClellan Air Force Base. There was a barrack made for military purpose and temporarily we were in there about six months.

GLADYS: No, no, Walerga is only one month. Then to Tule Lake.

MASAKI: One month.

HATANO: And then where did you get sent?

MASAKI: We got sent to Tule Lake.

HATANO: At that time, how many children did you have?

MASAKI: I had three children.

GLADYS: And your parents.

MASAKI: Three children.

GLADYS: And your Mother and Father.

HATANO: How old were the children at the time you were put in the camp?

GLADYS: Sets was about nine. Nine and five and two and a half, or something.

HATANO: How long did you stay in Tule Lake?

MASAKI: Approximately six months.

HATANO: What did you do while you were in the camp?

MASAKI: I was assigned to the warehouse. And then later I was a mess steward. I was suppose to order food, but I never got to that point because we had older people with more experience but they didn't know English, so I got the job, but I was communicating with the older people who really managed the place. Take over. I was just more of a dummy. I also was the councilman for the block, meeting every week. And that's about it.

HATANO: When you were in camp, what did you think the effect was on your family, being put in camp and small children?

MASAKI: I didn't get to think very much because I saw that all the other Niseis and Isseis do the same thing I was doing. So we just went with the tide, you know. Do whatever we were told.

HATANO: Did you feel that the food you got in camp was okey, or?

MASAKI: I would say it was okey under the circumstances. Feeding ten thousand people at Tule Lake was not an easy proposition.

HATANO: Did you have an opportunity to do other things? Participate in different activities, athletic activities or anything like that?

MASAKI: I had the opportunity, but I didn't do it. It was coming into the winter. I think we evacuated Wallerga around in June and by the time we got there and settled in it was getting into winter so there was not much I could do.

HATANO: Did you think about leaving camp?

MASAKI: Yeah. I was looking forward to going somewhere else cause camp was limited. And, after we left, the fights and murders. I think we were lucky we left early. We went on up to relatives on a Utah ranch. They were supposed to have had a facility made for us to stay but we got kind of fooled. We went there and they had a one-room building with about fifteen people living in there.

GLADYS: With your brother's family. See, two families went out there. The first family that got out of Tule Lake were as seasonal workers. That's the only way to get out of there and the government was happy to...

MASAKI: No, we could get out of there by paying all the costs, transportation, trains. We went to Utah by train. I paid

four hundred and some odd dollars. It was quite a bit.

GLADYS: And we hired a Spreckels Sugar president from Honeyville to escort us out. We paid, how much a day for Mr. and Mrs. to escort us out? Seven-fifty or eight dollars a day or something like that those days, and that's how we got out. Cause he was saying that if we stayed in the camp...ever since our oldest boy was born, he wanted our kids to be doctors. So we had two boys and a girl and two boys gonna be doctors, because he couldn't be a doctor. During their grammar school days we used to tell them that you have to study hard if you gonna be a doctor. And you gotta do this, you gotta write this way, you gotta do this way. That's how we raised our boys.

HATANO: That was one of the reasons why you left camp?

GLADYS: Yes, that was the main reason, we want our boys to be doctors. There wasn't any school when we were there at Tule Lake. They were afraid. Hakujin were afraid to come to teach, see. The only teachers you had only finished high school. I don't think we had too many college boys, nihonjin, those days. So I know Toko, he's a

smart fellow. He used to gather the kids and they used the barracks for the school. Kids, all they're having is recess with basketball and football and baseball. And then they used to read. Not read, but tell the story of Urashima-taro, and Momo-taro and things that he knew, and no school. So our kids weren't being educated. Six months we're there. So this was the first chance for us to relocate.

### III.

HATANO: When you relocated, what kind of job did you do?

MASAKI: Well, since we didn't know that the farmer wanted our help, manual help...they raised sugar beets that were topped by hand and thrown onto the truck by hand. They had no mechanical farming equipment. They needed hand work, so they wanted our help. Normally they would have gotten the help from out-of-state, but since there was a bunch of Japanese not doing anything, they wanted the Japanese to come and help harvest the apple, sugar beets, potatoes, onions. They recruited, farmers recruited, you know, with stack of papers showing they wanted so many people for harvesting apples. So we went

out and promised to work as sugar beet toppers. It wasn't the true purpose for getting out, we just wanted to get out.

HATANO: Did you get paid the same as the other workers?

MASAKI: It so happened that they were relatives. We worked and didn't get paid. In other words, Mr. Watanabe didn't pay us. We worked on his farm and his friend's farm and Mr. Watanabe didn't pay us. My Mother had to go out to settle the situation.

GLADYS: No. They came to tell us to pay the rent and the electricity that we're using in that one house. No, Father's the one, not Mother. He's a sharp fellow, and he says, "if you pay my son's wages we'll pay you out of that. First of all, you pay us our wages",

HATANO: Did he ever pay you?

GLADYS: I just don't know that part. And I did all the washing for them. They didn't like the washing. Those days, they had those Japanese ofuro. We used to taking ofuro here, American ofuro, every night. Our kids get dirty cause it's a farm and run around. They didn't like that. They say they're ruining the farm cause too much water goes outside. So I did the washing, their family

and mine. With seven of us and their family, by hand, those days, so they can't say anything. But Mr. Watanabe used to take us to uh, that, uh...

HATANO: Percy, when you initially left camp, you were farming there. What did you do next?

MASAKI: Farming? Where?

HATANO: In Utah, near Ogden, and then you moved into the city or...?

MASAKI: Yeah, our friend's place in Utah. Brigham City, Utah. We moved to Ogden, Utah, and then we set up a home there. I found a cheap house that was on sale for \$2,000. Imagine \$2,000 for a three bedroom house? I told them, "can you make it cheaper?" The real estate man told me that if you would go up \$500 more, I'd give it to you. In other words, the real estate man was selling the house. So I said I'd give him \$2,500 so we got the house. It was on Harrison Blvd overlooking Ogden town, I think it's a beautiful spot today. And, my Father got to use next door's lot to plant the vegetables. Even though we didn't get any permit from anybody, we raised the vegetables. We raised vegetables and chickens, too.

HATANO: Were your neighbors all hakujin there?

MASAKI: Yeah. They were all hakujin.

HATANO: And, I would guess that you got along well with all your neighbors. There's no discrimination or anything?

MASAKI: We stayed there for many years, nobody said anything about the lot. I heard that the lot was owned by some people up the hill but they never came and told us it can't be used. So our Father got the best of it and planted the potato, melon, whatever.

HATANO: Percy, this was during the war, and later on they started drafting Japanese people. Were you ever subject to military service?

MASAKI: I was of age, but since I had a big dependents, seven including myself, I was exempt, 4F.

## IV.

HATANO: Later on you left Ogden and you came back to Sacramento?

MASAKI: Yeah. And then when we were ready to come back and people were coming back and they're not having a bad time, I came back, too.

HATANO: What year was that?

MASAKI: Must be 1944? I don't remember the exact date.

HATANO: When you came back here what did you do?

MASAKI: Well, before we moved from the West Coast, I had a market, and as I got older, the market's cement floor, market is not good for me, so I was hoping to get into something else, so I got into the insurance business with Sumio Miyamoto. And later, I got into the real estate business. In those days real estate was easy to sell. Any investments that I made, I figured out that if I can double my investments, I would do all right. So I made a few bucks.

HATANO: So you changed your line of work and everything was turning out quite well and I would guess that you started getting active in community activities also.

MASAKI: I tried to. I had my real estate office in Japan Town in Sacramento. I also took up JACL. Since no one else wanted to go out and get membership dues, I made a trip to downtown area and what used to be 100 members or less grew up to as much as 1,000 at one time. Now it's down to 250 or 300. I didn't want to let the JACL down. Of course, we have a nice bunch of people that I should do my best to support the JACL so I became a self-made membership chairman. Made the receipt out and gave them to various places in town. I gave them five minutes to

fill out the receipt.

HATANO: You also held a lot of other positions in the JACL, is that correct?

MASAKI: I was president one time, 1956, and ever since, my office was headquarter for JACL, so a lot of business came in and out, for JACL, not for me. I went on to organize the Junior Olympics, which was competition of athletes from San Francisco, Berkeley, Reedley. I brought them from our local Sacramento bunch. My wife and I organized the group to take them to San Francisco to meet in this competition of high jumps, relays, and all the other sports that go with it.

HATANO: You were also involved with the scholarships that are being given out here by the Sacramento JACL, tell us about that.

MASAKI: It so happened that scholarship was actually originated by myself and Kay Hamatani. Kay was the biggest farmer in Sacramento with about seven brothers. In the meantime, in the course of the years, I got to know the people. Dr. George Takahashi, optometrist, was made the chairman of the scholarship committee. Meantime, George wanted to get out of it because it was too much

work, so I finally found Midori Hiyama and I asked her one time in the car whether she wants to do the scholarship. She readily took the job, and ever since 15, 20 years, she's been the membership, not membership, but scholarship chairman. She is doing a beautiful job even after her stroke. She is crippled but Frank, her husband, brings her in the wheelchair to the various meetings and she's still formally the scholarship chairman.

HATANO: Percy, have you been involved in developing other programs for the JACL?

MASAKI: Well, I took over the Junior Olympics, scholarship and those days we used to have JACL queen contest for Northern California District Council. We took over the queen contest for that year and my wife did most of the work, so I got the job for her. We won the competition too. During that period, Sacramento became very popular with the JACL and the public rallied with enthusiasm and became biggest Thousand Club members. We had over 100 Thousand Club members, more than Los Angeles chapter and so forth. So the queen contest was really good for the JACL and we held many meetings in Sacra-

mento and Sacramento became a popular chapter. We had lots of supporters. Let's see what else? (I was JACL advisor to a new Junior JACL. I helped start group health insurance program and for about ten years was Commissioner from Sacramento on district board. I also started local JACL newsletter and was publisher, reporter, printer, mailer...)

HATANO: One of the most significant things that JACL was involved in was the reparations. Do you recall where all the internees received \$20,000, all the surviving internees, and, I'm sure that you were involved in that. That was something that people thought would never happen.

MASAKI: Right. Sacramento Chapter and all the other chapters got their lead from National Headquarters as to reparations. We got their orders so we asked the membership to donate money, so forth, to the Chapter and our response was pretty good from our membership. Many of us had to donate as much as \$100 and I think we came out pretty good, \$20,000.

HATANO: Yeah, that was really a significant accomplishment. Have you been involved in any other organization other than the JACL?

MASAKI: No I haven't. (Oh yeah, we were involved in "I AM AN AMERICAN" events with other ethnic groups in Sacramento in the '50s which later joined with the Camellia Show and became part of the annual Sacramento Camellia Festival. Sacramento Junior Chamber of Commerce and Ichinomiya City Junior Chamber of Commerce had student exchange program we participated in. We had many students stay with us. We also became members of Matsuyama-Sacramento Sister City Association.)

V.

HATANO: I guess we'll talk a little bit about more recent times and your family, and do you still get together with all of your children? They're married now? Grandchildren?

MASAKI: It so happens that we get along pretty good with my children and grandchildren and we get together until recently some of the grandchildren are going out away from home, getting married, we still get together quite often.

HATANO: Percy, do you tell your children and your grandchildren stories about your early days living in this area, the wartime experiences, postwar period, do you talk to them

about any of this?

MASAKI: No, I don't.

HATANO: That question again, was, why don't you talk to your children and your grandchildren about all of the experiences that you had before the war, during the war, after the war?

MASAKI: Maybe I felt that they would get enough feedback from what we're doing. Whether we get reparation money or helping out the JACL. They see what we're doing so we don't need to tell them the story. Possibly they might be reading some of the material that we're producing. Maybe that's the reason.

HATANO: Earlier, you talked about your children and wanting them to become doctors. Obviously, this tells me that you hold very high values for getting people educated. Can you talk about what you've done for your grandchildren?

MASAKI: Well, in the first place, I like to see my kids well educated. For them to be somebody.

HATANO: What have you personally done to help them achieve this education?

HATANO: Well, when they asked me, they were in high school,

"do I get to go to college?" I told them yeah. When the time came, it so happened to be the University of Michigan. I sent the application and my boy got accepted. In the meantime when the first one graduated from medical school, we wanted to send the second one to school. He didn't want to be a doctor. He wanted to be a dentist so that he would have free time. So my wife said we should send the boy to same school because that's where the other boy graduated. If it's not equal, if it's a lower grade school, he might resent being sent to some other school so we applied for Michigan again, and he was halfway accepted. One subject he should have but didn't have so the University of Michigan told me that if that one subject is completed they would accept him as a dental student. I wrote that and told him that but by that time he was enrolled in a summer course and he was accepted as a dental student. So he went to Berkeley University, two years to UC Berkeley and four years to University of Michigan and he became a dentist and now he's practicing in Hawaii because they would have fun playing in the sun. Then he got married in

in Hawaii to Elaine Kingsley. They have two children now and Erin is going to university right now, so I'm hesitating as to paying the tuition which is \$20,000 a year. I feel that's a little too high for tuition. Because of big rates, they're from Hawaii, that out of state students have to pay extra money. In other words, \$10,000 scholarship shouldn't be doubled, so I don't know what they're doing, maybe figuring it out. I would help him some, but after all, you know I can't be digging out of my pocket that deep as I supported three doctors, one physical therapist, my granddaughter extra years in school. So I guess that's about all.

HATANO: As you look back in life, Percy, is there something that happened, something that you did, that you'd like to talk about now?

MASAKI: Humh, something like, well, there's lots to talk about but I'm right next to a good one, heh, heh. Bad when I talk a lot.

HATANO: I guess we pretty much covered most of the things. Let me ask you if you were to give some advice to the younger people today, what will you tell them?

MASAKI: Number one, be a good boy. So far everyone of them is

doing good. Of course, Michael, Dr. Michael Matsumoto, my grandson, was here yesterday and spent hours of time here and looking at him he's a good boy. And, my granddaughter, just got a Juris Doctorate in Law less than a month ago and I'd like to see all the other kids succeed, that's all. Go to school and be somebody that we can all...I guess that's about it. (I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to my children and grandchildren for making us so happy and proud. My oldest son did become a doctor. My second son became a dentist. My daughter became a physical therapist. And my grandchildren...Cynthia got MBA, Diana has a BA in agriculture. Paul has a BA in Biology. Julie has a doctorate in Law. Michael became an MD. Erin is a freshman in college. Heather is still in high school and planning to go to college. Education is very important.)

HATANO: Percy, do you have any regrets in your life not having done something, or something that you did that you wish that you didn't do? Can you remember something like that?

MASAKI: I didn't get you.

HATANO: Well, do you have any regrets? About not having done something you thought, well, maybe I would like to have been a doctor? Do you have any regrets that you did not become a doctor, for example?

MASAKI: Ummmm, I never felt any depression in my lifetime and I've been pretty lucky. (My only regret I have about myself, as I look back, is that I was not able to complete higher education.)

★ CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION ★

Sacramento Chapter  
Japanese American Citizens League  
honors

Mr. & Mrs. Harry Masaki

In grateful Recognition of special meritorious  
Services to the Chapter and Contributions  
to the Welfare of Japanese Americans. For  
giving generously of their time and efforts  
during 1965 to enroll and service members  
in the JACL CPS Group Health Program.

January 29, 1966

THROUGH



Japanese American Citizens League  
one thousand club

Perry T. Masaki

is presented this

Certificate of Life Membership

In grateful Recognition of sustained Interest,  
outstanding Loyalty, and generous Support.



Frank C. Fukada

JACL National Director



## An American Promise

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

In this Bicentennial Year, we are commemorating the anniversary dates of many of the great events in American history. An honest reckoning, however, must include a recognition of our national mistakes as well as our national achievements. Learning from our mistakes is not pleasant, but as a great philosopher once admonished, we must do so if we want to avoid repeating them.

February 19th is the anniversary of a sad day in American history. It was on that date in 1942, in the midst of the response to the hostilities that began on December 7, 1941, that Executive Order No. 9066 was issued, subsequently enforced by the criminal penalties of a statute enacted March 21, 1942, resulting in the uprooting of loyal Americans. Over one hundred thousand persons of Japanese ancestry were removed from their homes, detained in special camps, and eventually relocated.

The tremendous effort by the War Relocation Authority and concerned Americans for the welfare of these Japanese-Americans may add perspective to that story, but it does not erase the setback to fundamental American principles. Fortunately, the Japanese-American community in Hawaii was spared the indignities suffered by those on our mainland.

We now know what we should have known then—not only was that evacuation wrong, but Japanese-Americans were and are loyal Americans. On the battlefield and at home, Japanese-Americans—names like Hamada, Mitsumori, Marimoto, Noguchi, Yamasaki, Kido, Munemori and Miyamura—have been and continue to be written in our history for the sacrifices and the contributions they have made to the well-being and security of this, our common Nation.

The Executive order that was issued on February 19, 1942, was for the sole purpose of prosecuting the war with the Axis Powers, and ceased to be effective with the end of those hostilities. Because there was no formal statement of its termination, however, there is concern among many Japanese-Americans that there may yet be some life in that obsolete document. I think it appropriate, in this our Bicentennial Year, to remove all doubt on that matter, and to make clear our commitment in the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim that all the authority conferred by Executive Order No. 9066 terminated upon the issuance of Proclamation No. 2714, which formally proclaimed the cessation of the hostilities of World War II on December 31, 1946.

I call upon the American people to affirm with me this American Promise—that we have learned from the tragedy of that long-ago experience forever to treasure liberty and justice for each individual American, and resolve that this kind of action shall never again be repeated.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of February in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred sixth.

# California Legislature

# Resolution

By Assemblymen WILLIE L. BROWN, JR., ART TORRES, ART AGNOS, RICHARD ALATORRE, TOM BANE, TOM BATES, Assemblywoman MARIAN BERGESON, Assemblymen HOWARD L. BERMAN, DOUGLAS H. BOSCO, DENNIS BROWN, ROBERT J. CAMPBELL, PETER R. CHACON, DOMINIC L. CORTESE, JIM COSTA, JIM CRAMER, WADIE P. DEDDEH, GORDON W. DUFFY, DAVE ELDER, SAM FARR, GERALD N. FELANDO, WILLIAM J. FILANTE, M.D., ROBERT C. FRAZEE, TERRY GOGGIN, LEROY F. GREENE, Assemblywoman CAROL HALLETT, Assemblymen THOMAS M. HANNIGAN, ELIHU M. HARRIS, GARY K. HART, WALLY HERGER, Assemblywoman TERESA P. HUGHES, Assemblymen CHARLES R. IMBRECHT, WALTER M. INGALLS, WILLIAM H. IVERS, ROSS JOHNSON, PATRICK JOHNSTON, LAWRENCE KAPILOFF, RICHARD KATZ, DAVID G. KELLEY, ERNEST L. KONNYU, Assemblywoman MARIAN W. LA FOLLETTE, Assemblymen RICHARD LEHMAN, WILLIAM R. LEONARD, MEL LEVINE, BILL LOCKYER, GILBERT R. MARGUTH, MATTHEW G. MARTINEZ, ALISTER McALISTER, LEO T. McCARTHY, Assemblywomen GENE MOORE, JEAN M. MOORHEAD, Assemblymen ROBERT W. NAYLOR, PATRICK J. NOLAN, LOUIS J. PAPAN, RICHARD ROBINSON, DON ROGERS, MIKE ROOS, HERSCHEL ROSENTHAL, Assemblywoman MARILYN RYAN, Assemblymen DON SEBASTIANI, BYRON SHER, STAN STATHAM, DAVE STIRLING, Assemblywoman SALLY TANNER, Assemblymen JOHN E. THURMAN, CURTIS R. TUCKER, JOHN VASCONCELLOS, FRANK VICENCIA, Assemblywoman MAXINE WATERS, Assemblymen NORMAN S. WATERS, CHESTER B. WRAY, Assemblywoman CATHIE WRIGHT, Assemblymen PHILLIP D. WYMAN and BRUCE YOUNG; and

By Senators ALFRED E. ALQUIST, RUBEN S. AYALA, ROBERT G. BEVERLY, RALPH C. DILLS, JOHN F. FORAN, JOHN R. GARAMENDI, RAY JOHNSON, BARRY KEENE, KEN MADDY, MILTON MARKS, HENRY J. MELLO, JAMES R. MILLS, JOSEPH B. MONTOYA, JIM NIELSEN, NICHOLAS C. PETRIS, ROBERT PRESLEY, OMER L. RAINS, ALAN ROBBINS, DAVID ROBERTI, NEWTON R. RUSSELL, ALAN SIEROTY, OLLIE SPERAW, WALTER W. STIERN, ROSE ANN VUICH and DIANE E. WATSON

## RELATIVE TO "A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE"

WHEREAS, FEBRUARY 19, 1981 MARKS THE 39TH ANNIVERSARY OF A DAY IN AMERICAN HISTORY WHICH WILL LONG LIVE IN THE MEMORY OF COUNTLESS AMERICAN CITIZENS, FOR IT WAS ON THAT DAY IN 1942, THAT EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 9066 WAS ISSUED, UPROOTING OVER 110,000 PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY FROM THEIR HOMES TO BE DETAINED IN INTERNMENT CAMPS; AND

WHEREAS, ALTHOUGH THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES TODAY EXPRESS REMORSE, AND WONDER HOW SUCH CONSTITUTIONAL AND MORAL VIOLATIONS COULD BE PUT INTO EFFECT, DENYING PERSONS THE ENJOYMENT OF THE BASIC GUARANTEES ENUMERATED IN THE BILL OF RIGHTS, THIS REGRET CAN NEVER UNDO THE WRONG INFILCTED UPON LOYAL AMERICANS; AND

WHEREAS, IN FURTHERANCE OF THE CONVICTION THAT THIS TYPE OF INJUSTICE WILL NEVER AGAIN OCCUR, PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD ISSUED, ON FEBRUARY 19, 1976, AN AMERICAN PROMISE IN THE FORM OF A PROCLAMATION WHICH STATED THAT THE AUTHORITY CONFERRED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 9066 TERMINATED UPON THE ISSUANCE OF PROCLAMATION NO. 2714; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED BY THE JOINT RULES COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE AND THE ASSEMBLY, THAT THE MEMBERS AFFIRM THAT THE CITIZENS OF CALIFORNIA AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE LEARNED FROM THE TRAGEDIES THAT CAME FROM EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 9066 AND ITS DENIAL OF LIBERTY AND JUSTICE TO AMERICANS; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, THAT FEBRUARY 19, 1981, BE RECOGNIZED AS "A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE," A TIME SET ASIDE SO THAT PERSONS MIGHT REFLECT UPON THE SHARED RESPONSIBILITY TO UPHOLD THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND MORAL RIGHTS OF ALL INDIVIDUALS AT ALL TIMES; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, THAT A SUITABLY PREPARED COPY OF THIS RESOLUTION BE TRANSMITTED TO THE AUTHOR FOR DISTRIBUTION.

RESOLUTION NO. 98  
APPROVED BY THE JOINT RULES COMMITTEE

SUBSCRIBED THIS 18TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1981

DAVID ROBERTI, CHAIRMAN  
SENATE RULES COMMITTEE

MIKE CURB  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

LOUIS J. PAPAN, CHAIRMAN  
ASSEMBLY RULES COMMITTEE

WILLIE L. BROWN, JR.  
SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY





United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 97<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 128

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 1982

No. 30

## *House of Representatives*

IN TRIBUTE TO PERCY AND  
GLADYS MASAKI

**HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 23, 1982*

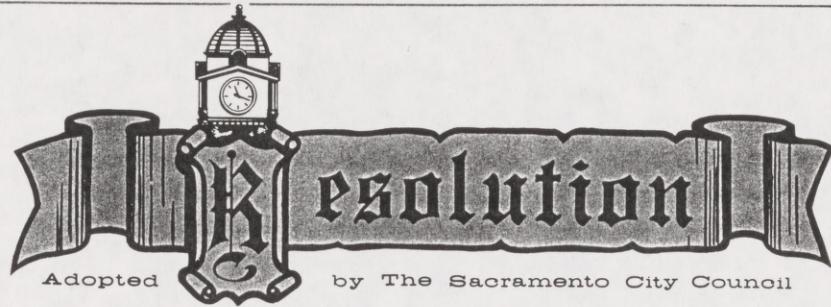
• Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I pay tribute today to the abilities and achievements of one of Sacramento's finest citizens, Mr. Percy Masaki. Percy Masaki, after 30 years of service with the Sacramento chapter of the Japanese American Citizen's League, will be retiring from his role as membership chairman of the JACL.

Percy Masaki, aided by his devoted wife Gladys, has shown energetic leadership and talent in all facets of his career. Besides building a thriving real estate and insurance business, Percy has donated a great portion of his time to numerous community causes. The great variety of his accomplishments attest to his concern for all aspects of Sacramento's civic needs.

Percy has served with distinction as the local chapter commissioner of the Blue Shield health plan, a Junior Olympic organizer for the annual

Junior Olympic games held in San Francisco, a junior JACL adviser and chairman of the 1974 Camellia Festival International Division. Moreover, he had been an active champion of JACL activities. Aside from his duties as membership chairman, Percy published the Sacramento JACL chapter newsletters in his office for 30 years. One of his greatest contributions, however, was the establishment of the JACL scholarship in 1957. To date, because of Percy's foresight, over 18 scholarships have been awarded to deserving students for their education with moneys donated by numerous banks, clubs, and friends.

Given this outstanding record of public service, I am sure that all Members of this House, and particularly our California delegation, will join me in extending best wishes to Percy Masaki and his wife Gladys on their retirement. As a Representative of the Third District of California in the Congress of the United States, it is a great honor to recognize officially the Masakis' tremendous gift of time and talent to the Sacramento area, to the entire State of California, and to this Nation.●



Adopted by The Sacramento City Council

WHEREAS, Percy Masaki is a native of Sacramento who graduated from Sacramento High School and who has been a generous and active member of our community all of his life; and,

WHEREAS, Mr. Masaki has been a member of the Japanese American Citizens League for many years and has served in numerous capacities including 30 years as Membership Chairman and publisher of the Chapter newsletter, 27 years as a 1,000 Clubber (now Century Clubber), 15 years as Assistant Treasurer and local Chapter Blue Shield Health Plan Commissioner, and 12 years as Junior Japanese American Citizens League Advisor and Junior Olympics Organizer; and,

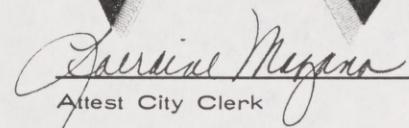
WHEREAS, in 1956, Mr. Masaki was Chapter President and, in 1957, originated a Japanese American Citizens League scholarship that generated the 18 scholarships currently being donated by banks, clubs and friends; and,

WHEREAS, in addition to their unlimited time and commitment, Mr. and Mrs. Masaki have made a most important contribution through their three children and seven grandchildren, all of whom are assets to their communities.

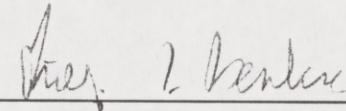
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and members of the Sacramento City Council, that we commend Percy and Gladys Masaki for their valuable and constant contributions to Sacramento and that we extend our sincere congratulations to them upon their retirement on March 27, 1982.

Date: March 27, 1982

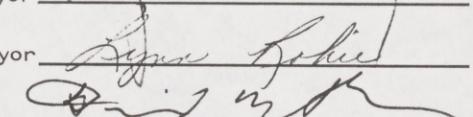


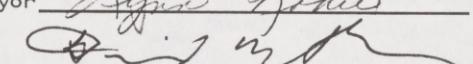
  
Attest City Clerk

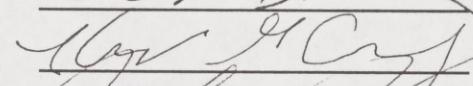
Mayor

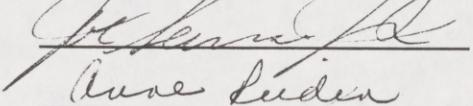
  
May L. Venter

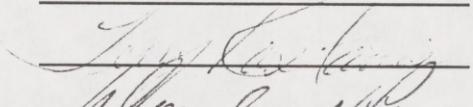
Vice Mayor

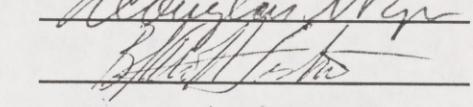
  
George Kohl

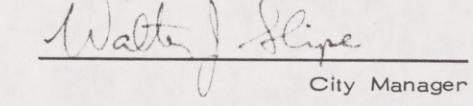
  
Jim Morris

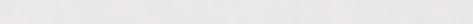
  
Tom H. Clegg

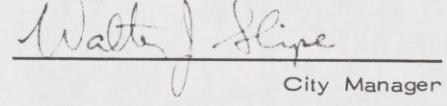
  
John L. Lewis

  
Anne Ludden

  
Jerry L. Johnson

  
Douglas W. McRae

  
Billie F. Tuck

  
Walter J. Slipe

City Manager



**PRESENTED TO**

GLADYS and PERCY MASAKI

**BY THE**

SACRAMENTO JAYCEES

**&  
THE UNITED STATES JAYCEES**

**CONSCIOUS OF YOUR  
CONCERN FOR MANKIND.  
AND OUR NATION.  
EXPRESS, IN THIS WAY, OUR  
APPRECIATION FOR YOUR SUPPORT.**

**Dated This Day      28th      of July      1982**

Donald R. Hunt  
**Secretary**

Robert V. Bolisud, Jr.  
**President**

**CERTIFICATE  
OF APPRECIATION**



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

ROBERT T. MATSUI  
3RD DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

August 21, 1982

Dear Percy and Gladys:

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on this your Golden Wedding Anniversary.

In these modern times when the marriage vows are taken so lightly, it is certainly reassuring to know there are couples like you whose marriage will be forever young. You have truly set a great example of real love and accomplishment, and I know you cherish many wonderful memories of your past fifty years together.

May you both be blessed with good health and happiness for many years to come. I extend my very best wishes for a most enjoyable celebration of this special, memorable occasion.

With warmest regards, I am

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive ink, appearing to read "Bd".

ROBERT T. MATSUI  
Member of Congress

Mr. and Mrs. Percy Masaki  
481 Arden Way  
Sacramento, CA 95815

10,15,1990

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

A monetary sum and words alone cannot restore lost years or erase painful memories; neither can they fully convey our Nation's resolve to rectify injustice and to uphold the rights of individuals. We can never fully right the wrongs of the past. But we can take a clear stand for justice and recognize that serious injustices were done to Japanese Americans during World War II.

In enacting a law calling for restitution and offering a sincere apology, your fellow Americans have, in a very real sense, renewed their traditional commitment to the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice. You and your family have our best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,

*G. Bush*

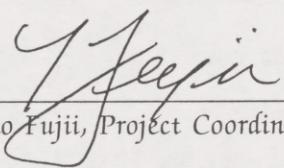
1992 JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL EXHIBIT

"Japanese Americans: Story of a People, 1869-1992"

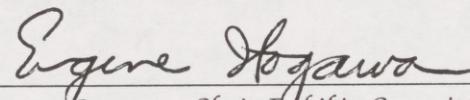
recognizes

*Percy and Gladys Masaki*

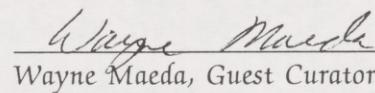
for your invaluable contribution  
as a generous loaner of artifacts



Toko Fujii, Project Coordinator



Eugene Itogawa, Chair Exhibit Committee



Wayne Maeda, Guest Curator

# HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE

The Buddhist Church of Sacramento  
Hongwanji Betsuin Board of Trustees  
presents this certificate

to

Percy T. Masaki

in recognition and appreciation  
of your role in the growth  
and development of our temple

Apr. 2, 1995

Date

Wayne Kurahara

President

## 名 誉 終 生 会 員 証

本願寺サクラメント別院理事会におきましては貴殿の  
多年に亘る別院維持発展の御功績に報いる為に、 貴  
殿に当別院の名誉終生会員としての証を御贈りいたします。

合 掌

本願寺サクラメント別院